



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SATURDAY, 24 JULY 1982

COMMONWEALTH GAMES CHEQUE HANDOVER

This is one of those happy functions, and it is the sort of function that politicians dream about. You have a cheque in your pocket all morning, and hope you don't lose it, and you know you are going to give it away to somebody at lunch time.

It is in a good cause, and the Commonwealth has been supporting the Commonwealth Games quite strongly, and a few years ago now, we began the business of providing additional support for the Commonwealth Games Federation or the Olympic Games Federation so that there could be adequate free training for the teams that were ultimately going to represent Australia. This was a policy that was introduced to our own athletes, a greater opportunity to compete on equal terms.

What I am here for today is to hand over the last cheque to Mr Les Martyn, from the Commonwealth of \$155,000 as the final payment of about \$455,000 for the pre-Games preparation and out-fitting of the Australian team.

Overall the Commonwealth contribution and of course, the Queensland contribution has been substantial, very nearly \$40 million. I toured the facilities with the Chairman of the organising committee, Ned Williams, last week, and the Games facilities I believe, are going to be as good as any in the world. They have been constructed with the highest possible standards, the new swimming pool is a marvel for people who were used to the swimming pools of older days. We are looking to see Commonwealth Games' records broken and there will be over 40 countries represented.

It has all be played on a low-key basis up to this stage, because there were talks of boycotts and all sorts of things, which nobody really wanted to hear much about, but that was resolved in a meeting in May and there will be a tremendous representation at the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane.

It is also going to be the first significant test of the Australian Institute of Sport which has been operating now for the best part of two years, offering the most modern training techniques. A combination of that with full knowledge and experience, again sports medicine, offering the latest techniques to Australian athletes in a significant number of sports that will be relevant to the competitions in Queensland.

Australia probably realised too late that if we are going to compete in international tournaments and international competitions whether it is the Commonwealth Games or the Olympic Games, or other purely team sports on a one-sport basis, then we are going to have to offer better opportunities for training Australian athletes than we had in earlier times. It was really out of discussions with some Australian athletes after the Montreal Games, I said: "what is wrong, why aren't we doing as well as we have got used to doing?" Australians had regarded that winning came naturally to Australians and almost without rival. Then we find that it is hard to win at Wimbledon or the Davis Cup, it was hard the win at the Olympic Games, and harder to win at the Commonwealth Games because other countries have been giving much greater support and attention to their athletes, than we have, with the opportunities for training of a most intensive kind. If we were going to be in the business, I think all Australians would want to be out there winning, out front, so that meant that we had to do more. The pre-Games preparation at the Australian Institute of Sport represents two different avenues of attack as far as the Commonwealth is concerned in co-operation of Australian sports men and women, to try and do something to get Australians out front.

We are hoping that the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane are going to be an Australian first, in more than one way. The Games are going to be held here and we are working and hoping, as I am sure our athletes are, to see that we take out more gold medals and more victories than the athletes of any other country.

I am sure that it is going to be a great event, and if Les Martyn will come forward - I still have the cheque Les, I didn't lose it at the Liberal Party Conference this morning - although they might need it more than you.

Before handing over to Les, I would just like to wish all good fortune to all those Australian athletes who will be competing in Brisbane, for those who will be training, assisting and helping, to Les Martyn and his cohorts. It is going to be a great event, I am going to shift the Commonwealth Government to Brisbane for that particular week. It is as far as I am concerned, I hope to see a good deal of it. I believe it will be a happy occasion for Australia and one of the most significant sporting events which Australia has managed to mount.